

C. H. H. H.

CURTAINS GOING UP



ISSUED BY DIRECTION OF
HON. D.A. URE
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE
PREPARED BY HOME DESIGNING OFFICE
EXTENSION SERVICE BRANCH
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

"CURTAINS GOING UP"

As your curtains go up you are arranging one of the most important features of your entire decoration scheme. Success in curtaining depends upon many factors and not just a hit-and-miss guess about a pretty fabric.

Many factors determine the amount of attention you should focus at the windows and the type of treatment you should plan.

- your room may be large or small, narrow or irregular or just average.
- there may be an abundance of natural light or a considerable lack of it.
- the windows may be double hung, casement or modern thermopane.
- you must consider the colours and patterns established in the decorative scheme.

Draperies can be one of the most important accents in a room, especially since they form a frame for the window which naturally attracts your eye. The style of your draperies should depend to a large extent on the style of your other furnishings.

Floor length draperies with draped or shaped valances belong in the formal room.

Kill length draperies belong in the informal homey rooms.

Style is by no means the only important point to consider in choosing the right draperies. Equally important is the right kind of fabric. Silks or rayons, satins, damasks, taffetas, brocades and velvets are for the large formal room. Chintzes, cotton homespuns, checked ginghams, cretonnes, crapes and flims are best suited to the cozy informal room. The choice of plain or patterned material depends upon the rest of the decorating scheme.

Whatever type of fabric is used, it must be color fast, guaranteed not to fade in the sun or washing. If drapes must be cleaned by laundering make sure that the fabric is washable and either allow for shrinkage or buy pre-shrunk material.



Glass Curtains -- are of sheer material hung across the window glass to modify or subdue the light and screen the interior of the room from outside view. They may be used alone or combined with overdraperies. They should be very full to be attractive. Glass curtains should be neutral in colour (white, eggshell, champagne tones) or the same colour as the walls.

The length of glass curtains corresponds with the length of draperies except when radiator, window seat or some built-in feature is placed below the window. Then, the glass curtains should be sill length, yet the draperies may be floor length. Glass curtains should never drape on the floor. Their proper length is to clear the floor.

How Much Material -- Generally speaking each single side drape should be equivalent in width to the entire width of the window. Thus for drapes at each side of the window 50" wide you need two lengths of 50" width material. For some windows, each side drape may be a width and a half which may be gained by splitting one length of material in two and using one and a half on each side. For example three widths of 36" wide material could be used satisfactorily on a 50" window -- if the drapes are not to be drawn.

It is not difficult to achieve professional looking drapes which hang in straight even folds if a few simple rules are followed. The secret lies in accurate measurements, careful cutting, joining the lining, and laying the pleats at the heading.

Drapes must be cut and measured on a flat level surface large enough to accommodate the whole drape. The floor is a satisfactory place. You will need plenty of straight pins, a pair of sharp scissors and a tape measure. (the flexible metal tape is most accurate).

Length of Curtains

Curtains should be sill, apron (the narrow strip of wood below the sill) or floor length. Never cut them half way between the apron and the floor unless you have an extremely high baseboard which might serve as a stopping point.

Width of jamb to jambinches

Length from curtain fixtures to sillinches

Length from curtain fixtures to aproninches

Length from curtain fixtures to floorinches

In planning curtains the actual measurement of each window is an important consideration. Very often in a room of two or more windows, they may appear to be the same in width and height, yet vary as much as two inches or more.



Fig. 1

Take measurements as shown in Figure 1. To these measurements add the allowance for hems, casings, heading and shrinkage. Hems in glass curtains may vary from 1" to 2½" in width. In sheer material, hems are bent double; thus allow 5" for a 2½" hem. At the top an allowance of 4" for casings and headings plus ¼" turn should be made. If material is preshrunk no further allowance is necessary. Otherwise allow 1" a yard for shrinkage.

Glass Curtains -- To length measurement add 2" for casing, 1" for heading, ½" for turning, 1" for shrinkage plus the depth of the bottom hem. If double 2½" hems are used add twice the depth or 5". Glass curtains 72" long require 83½" of material. For width allowance consider the sheerness of the fabric you are using and the effect desired -- voile, marquisette usually require twice the width of the window, heavier fabrics such as fish net require only 1½ times the width.

Draperies - To length measurement add 1" for rod, 2" for heading, 1" for top hem, 1" for bottom.

Cutting

Curtains must hang straight with the warp and woof threads of the material, if they are to be well hung. For this reason, always work with the weaves in cutting your fabric. Pull material (Figure 2) to be sure that the crosswise threads (woof) is in a straight line. Start with a straight crosswise thread and cutting on the drawn thread. (Figure 3) If material slopes up on one edge the piece must be stretched and straightened before cutting. Remove all selvages. Tight selvages draw, especially when hanging. Many fabrics tend to give when hung, and if selvages have not been removed, a baggy curtain is the result. If one is not careful to work with the straight grain of the material, the curtain will soon roll or curl to one side.



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Lining - The best material for lining drapes is tullest, cream or white satin. There are many reasons for lining draperies.

1. Protection of the fabric
2. Gives weight to the window effect
3. Allows draperies to hang in richer folds

Lining should be cut 4" - 5" narrower than the curtain fabric and 6" shorter.

In stitching, place right sides together. Place top lining material 5" from top of curtains, this leaves lining material 5" from bottom of the curtain (Figure 4). Pin edges together on the sewing machine taking a $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam. Stitch both sides from the top down. Clip seam edges every 4" - 5" to prevent drawing. (Figure 5) and steam press these open. Then turn curtains right side out and press from right side.



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

Interlined drapes - rarely are drapes interlined, except in very formal rooms or when the character of the material is such that the extra weight is necessary for its protection. Extra warmth may be gained by interlining draw-drapes used over large modern expanses of window.

For interlining material, use good quality cotton flannel. Cut interlining the exact measurements of the finished drapery. Spread the material right side down.

Fold interlining through length-wise centre. Place fold on exact centre of drapery fabric, and tack loosely together. (Figure 6) Turn top, bottom and side hems back over the interlining. (Figure 7) Baste all edges. Outside lining can be stitched with sewing machine over same line of stitching. Clip seam every 4" - 5" press and turn right side out. Press again.



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

Hems, Heading and Weights for draperies

Draperies are usually finished at the top with some type of pleat to obtain fullness over a given space. For this reason stiffening is necessary. A strip of crinoline or buckram is most suitable. Stitch a strip of stiffening the same width as the hem (3" or wider depending on type of pleat used) across the top of the curtain from hem fold on each side. Turn hem back and press (Figure 8) Press side hems again at top. Miter corner and cut out surplus underneath. Turn under lap of lining $\frac{1}{2}$ " (Figure 9). Pin to place over edge of hem. Press and slip stitch down continuing across the mitered corner.



Fig 8



It is a good thing to finish the draperies at the top and then hang them to the windows on fixtures already mounted. Let them hang for two or three days before putting in lower hems. Materials give a little. It is worth while to take a little precaution and try the draperies to the window. It may save putting the hem in twice.

Bottom Hems - Turn edge back $\frac{1}{4}$ " and stitch on the fold. Do this on both drapery fabric and lining. Then turn hem the width necessary and slip stitch in by hand. A 3" hem in the lining is sufficient. The lining hem should hang below top of curtain hem. 1" approximately.

Weights -- all draperies should have weights of some type along the lower edge to keep the curtains down and cause it to hang in even folds. (Figure 10) Weights are placed at the mitered corners of the hem. When light-weight fabrics are used, such as tulle, chintz and novelty fabrics, it is advisable to use yardage weights in the hem. First, turn hem and then crease. If the material does not crease easily place pins to mark hem line. Place yardage weights along this line and baste to place, using long diagonal basting stitches. Weights should always be used in the hem of glass curtains. The round string weights (Fig. 11) are most suitable. The hems of glass curtains should be made double. The weights are placed back of the two thicknesses and held in place by a long running basting stitch through the fold of the hem.



Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Fig. 11

Headings and Top Finishes

The use of pleats is one of the most effective ways of finishing curtains and controlling the fullness which is to hang in even graceful folds.

Pleats should be made in groups of uneven numbers 3 - 5 or 7 depending on how many pleats will be required to take up the extra fullness. When 36" material is used 3-5 pleats are sufficient, but 50" material will require 5 - 7 or 9 pleats on each side. To make pleats, determine how much space on the rod the curtain is to cover. Sometimes it is desirable for the two sides of the curtain to come together at the centre of the rod. Generally they are pushed back to cover an even space on each end. To figure the spacings and amount to be taken up in pleats, a simple rule to follow is to determine the space to be covered plus return; (that is the distance from turn of rod to the wall). The width of the curtain material minus these two measurements is to be taken up in pleats.

Types of Pleats --

French pleats (Fig. 12) - this pleat is the most popular. It is used at top of draperies and for glass curtains when no over curtains or valance are used. At lower edge of heading divide pleats into 3 small pleats drawing up thread and fastening securely on underneath side.

Pinch Pleats (Fig. 13) - Evenly divide large pleat into 3 small pleats and press firmly. Be sure the three folds are evenly stitched across lower edge of heading.

Box pleats (Fig. 14) - Pleats are spread equal distance on each side of stitching and pressed flat. They should be tacked securely at top and bottom or they may be stitched across the bottom. This is a very good pleat when valances are used. In figuring these pleats, try for uniformity, that is the space in between each pleat (from fold to fold) should be the same as the width of the box pleat.

Cartridge Pleat (Fig. 15) - This is a very effective heading for glass curtains or for formal draperies. This is a round pleat, left loose and filled with a roll of cotton. The pleats take up 3" - 3½" and are spaced 3" - 3½" apart.

Shirred heading (Fig. 17) - run a row of shirring along top edge. Space 2" below line of stitching and run 3 to 5 rows of shirring 3/8" apart. Stitch all rows of shirring in the same direction. Seam sides of curtains.



Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15

Hems, Headings and Casings for Glass Curtains

The simplest way to finish glass curtains is to hem them. The hems at sides should be about $\frac{1}{4}$ " finished. Remove all selvages before turning hems. The centre side hems and bottom hem may be from 1" - $3\frac{1}{4}$ " wide.

When using sheer materials, such as gauze, net, voile and organdy, allow for double turns of hem at the centre sides and bottom. Double hems add much to the hang and general appearance of the curtains. Finish all side hems before making casings and headings.

Casing and headings (Fig. 14) - Allow $3\frac{1}{4}$ " above top of rod for casing and heading. Turn edge $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Then, turn a 2" hem. Pin, press and stitch on turned edge. Measure width for rod from row of stitching, allow for slight ease, and stitch, forming casing. Always stitch back on seam an inch or so.

Fig. 16



Fig. 17

Shirred heading (Fig. 17) - For a fine, shirred heading make 3 - 5 rows of shirring across top edge of curtain. Measure down from last row of shirring 3" and run 3 or 5 rows of shirring. Turn top shirring down on wrong side even with second group of shirring, forming a heading. Baste the two groups of shirring together. The fullness should be adjusted to fit a given space and stayed by stitching a length of tape across the back. See rings large enough to slip curtain rod through to the tape, three or four inches apart. This is very effective for kitchen and bathroom curtains.

Valances, Cornices, Swags

The main purpose of a valance or cornice is to connect a group of two or more windows forming a unit, or to form a connecting line between draperies forming a large window unit. Another purpose it serves is to conceal the fixtures on which curtains are hung.

They are mounted on a board (Fig. 18) the exact width of the window frame. The board may be 1" X 4" lumber attached to the window frame with angle irons. Valances and cornices have a tendency to lower the ceiling and should be used with great care in small rooms. A pattern of muslin or paper should be cut the exact length of the board on which the valance is to be mounted. This enables you to experiment with different sizes, depths and shapes of valance treatment.



Fig. 18



Fig. 19



Shaped valances (Fig. 19) should be made over a stiff foundation of buckram and should be lined and interlined unless it is quilted. Cut buckram the exact measurement of finished valance using paper or muslin pattern as a guide. Then cut cotton flannel interlining and fabric 1" larger on all edges. Next cut lining 1/4" larger on all edges.

Spread fabric wrong side up. On this place interlining. Pin, then baste all edges and press. Next place buckram against the interlining. Turn edge back over stiffening all around. Turn edges of lining 1/4" baste. Pin to back of valance and slip-stitch together. (Fig. 20)

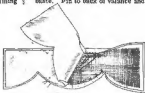


Fig. 20

The Swag

The depth of these swags (Fig. 31) depend upon height of window. The best plan is to experiment with muslin or paper patterns. For a window of average height, the finished swag should be 12" - 14" deep at the centre.

The top of the swag (Fig. 22 & 23) is cut straight in the crossgrain of the fabric and should be the length of the valance board plus 4" return on each end and $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance. The bottom is cut on a slight curve. To lay pleats, work from the top, making each pleat 1" deep. The second pleat overlaps the second and so on.

Cascades (Fig. 24 & 25) - make a muslin pattern before cutting the fabric. For the average window the outside length of the cascade should be about 30" long and measure 18" across the top. The facing of the cascade should be of self material or contrasting material. Cut the same size and stitch together then press.



Fig. 22



Fig. 23



Fig. 24



Fig. 25



Fig. 31

Finished Swag and Separate Parts

Changing Window Proportions

The whole appearance of a room can be changed by altering the windows. Many windows are out of proportion to the room. Narrow high windows tend to increase the height of the walls and cause the room to appear much smaller than its actual size. The reverse is true of low broad windows.

The apparent proportions and size of windows can be altered with the aid of design and draping of the fabric.

Increase Height (Fig. 26)

Place valance board above the top of window frame, screw it to the wall. The use of drapery material with a vertical stripe will give the illusion of height.

Increase Width (Fig. 27)

Windows can easily be made wider by placing the draw rods out over the end of the frame. This allows the curtains to cover part of the wall leaving the glass area free for more light and width. The use of a drapery material with a horizontal stripe will give the illusion of width.

Increase Height and Width (Fig. 28)

Using a combination of solutions to give new proportions to a low narrow window.



Fig. 26



Fig. 27



Fig. 28

Bay Window (Fig. 29)

Put your bay window to work and make it as useful as it is decorative. Make it a setting for chairs and a table, if it is large enough place your chairstool in it.

Glass curtains may be used to cover the window area with drapes at the outside edges only. When there isn't room for draperies on the edges, swags of drapery material hung across the top of windows may be used to beautify the window.



(Fig. 29)

Group of Windows (Fig. 30)

Treat the group of two or three as one window. Place valance board over the entire top of the group of windows. Hang drapes at the extreme ends and cover the intervening space with full glass curtains.

Dormer Window (Fig. 31)

If the dormer window is large enough place a dressing table or an occasional chair there. Don't block out the light with heavy drapes, the light is needed and simple dry glass curtains are your answer.

Small Door Window (Fig. 32)

The use of glass curtains with box pleats or pressed side pleats close enough to resemble accordion pleating will give added smartness. Neither is much work and gives your entrance added personality.

Piano or Fireplace Windows (Fig. 33)

Ever with us is the problem of two small windows placed high on either side of the fireplace. Their original purpose was for added light but with lighter walls and window treatments today we find we can block them out entirely, reclo them into receptacles for books or convert them into shadow boxes.

If such small windows must be retained for light, it is better to cover them completely with sheer glass curtains. Do not try to use the heavy drapery material used at the other windows.

The small high window of this type is sometimes found above the space for the buffet in the dining room. The same type of treatment can be used with equal success.

(Fig. 30)



(Fig. 31)



(Fig. 32)



(Fig. 33)

